

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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June 25, 1982

ALL-COUNTY LETTER NO. 82-60

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW

Chapter 162, Statutes of 1982 (AB 2303, Cramer) became effective as an urgency statute on April 26, 1982. This statute amended Penal Code (P.C.) Sections 11167, 11170 and 11174 within the Child Abuse Reporting Law. The comments relative to these sections in ACL 81-117 are superceded by the comments in this letter. The statute also repealed P.C. Section 11110 relating to the maintenance of child abuse records by the Department of Justice and incorporated the pertinent provisions of this section into P.C. Section 11170.

The changes in P.C. Sections 11167, 11170 and 11174 are discussed below:

Penal Code Section 11167

- (a) No Change
- (b) No Change
- (c) The identity of all persons who report child abuse is still confidential. However, the circumstances under which these identities may be disclosed have been clarified.

The identities may be disclosed ".... only between child protective agencies, or to counsel representing a child protective agency, or to the district attorney in a criminal prosecution or in an action initiated under Section 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code arising from alleged child abuse, or to counsel appointed pursuant to Section 318 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or to the county counsel or district attorney in an action initiated under Section 232 of the Civil Code or Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or when those persons waive confidentiality, or by court order."

Further, the anonymous reporting provisions have been removed from this subsection and placed in a new subsection (d).

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- (d) The anonymous reporting provisions have been placed in this new subsection. Anonymous reporting by non-mandated reporters is still permitted.

Penal Code Section 11170

The pertinent provisions of the repealed P.C. Section 11110 were amended into P.C. Section 11170. P.C. Section 11110 dealt with the maintenance of records of reports of child abuse by the Department of Justice.

The provisions regarding the requirements for the dissemination of the information retained by the Department of Justice remain the same.

Penal Code Section 11174

A technical language change was made to P.C. Section 11174 to clarify that the Department of Justice is only required to ensure that investigations of child abuse reported in group homes or institutions are conducted in accordance with the regulations required by this section.

A copy of Chapter 162, Statutes of 1982, and an updated copy of the Child Abuse Reporting Law has been attached for your use.

If you have any questions, please contact your Family and Children's Services Program Operations Bureau consultant at (916) 445-7653 or ATSS 485-7653.

  
CLAUDE FINN  
Deputy Director

Attachments

cc: CWDA

Assembly Bill No. 2303

CHAPTER 162

An act to amend Sections 11167, 11170, and 11174 of, and to repeal Section 11110 of, the Penal Code, relating to child abuse, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

[Approved by Governor April 24, 1982. Filed with Secretary of State April 26, 1982.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2303, Cramer. Child abuse.

Under existing law, the identity of persons who report incidents of known or suspected child abuse is confidential and is disclosed only in specified civil and criminal proceedings, by court order, or between child protective agencies.

This bill would revise the circumstances in which the identity of those persons may be disclosed in connection with civil and criminal proceedings and make a technical change.

It also would make a clarifying change with regard to the adoption of guidelines for specified instances of child abuse.

This bill would also revise existing law relating to the maintenance by the Department of Justice of records of all reports of suspected infliction of physical injury upon a minor by other than accidental means and reports of specified related arrests and convictions to, instead, require the maintenance of an index of all preliminary reports of child abuse, as specified.

It also would take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 11110 of the Penal Code is repealed.

SEC. 2. Section 11167 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

11167. (a) A telephone report of a known or suspected instance of child abuse shall include the name of the person making the report, the name of the child, the present location of the child, the nature and extent of the injury, and any other information, including information that led such person to suspect child abuse, requested by the child protective agency.

(b) Information relevant to the incident of child abuse may also be given to an investigator from a child protective agency who is investigating the known or suspected case of child abuse.

(c) The identity of all persons who report under this article shall be confidential and disclosed only between child protective agencies, or to counsel representing a child protective agency, or to the district attorney in a criminal prosecution or in an action initiated under Section 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code arising from

alleged child abuse, or to counsel appointed pursuant to Section 318 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or to the county counsel or district attorney in an action initiated under Section 232 of the Civil Code or Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or when those persons waive confidentiality, or by court order.

(d) Persons who may report pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 11166 are not required to include their names.

SEC. 3. Section 11170 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

11170. (a) The Department of Justice shall maintain an index of all preliminary reports of child abuse submitted pursuant to Section 11169. The index shall be continually updated by the department and shall not contain any reports that are determined to be unfounded. The department may adopt rules governing recordkeeping and reporting pursuant to this article.

(b) The Department of Justice shall immediately notify a child protective agency which submits a report pursuant to Section 11169, or a district attorney who requests notification, of any information maintained pursuant to subdivision (a) which is relevant to the known or suspected instance of child abuse reported by the agency. A child protective agency shall make that information available to the reporting medical practitioner, child custodian, or guardian ad litem appointed under Section 318 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, if he or she is treating or investigating a case of known or suspected child abuse.

When a report is made pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 11166, the investigating agency shall, upon completion of the investigation or after there has been a final disposition in the matter, inform the person required to report of the results of the investigation and of any action the agency is taking with regard to the child or family.

SEC. 4. Section 11174 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

11174. The Department of Justice, in cooperation with the State Department of Social Services, shall prescribe by regulation guidelines for the investigation of child abuse, as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 11165, in group homes or institutions and shall ensure that the investigation is conducted in accordance with the regulations and guidelines.

SEC. 5. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order that the provisions of this act shall achieve maximum implementation, it is necessary that this act take effect at the earliest possible date.

CALIFORNIA

PENAL CODE

Article 2.5. Child Abuse Reporting

11165. As used in this article:

(a) "Child" means a person under the age of 18 years.

(b) "Sexual assault" means conduct in violation of the following sections of the Penal Code: Sections 261 (rape), 264.1 (rape in concert), 285 (incest), 286 (sodomy), subdivisions (a) and (b) of Section 288 (lewd or lascivious acts upon a child under 14 years of age), and Sections 288a (oral copulation), 289 (penetration of a genital or anal opening by a foreign object), and 647a (child molestation).

(c) "Neglect" means the negligent treatment or the maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances indicating harm or threatened harm to the child's health or welfare. The term includes both acts and omissions on the part of the responsible person.

(1) "Severe neglect" means the negligent failure of a person having the care or custody of a child to protect the child from severe malnutrition or medically diagnosed nonorganic failure to thrive. "Severe neglect" also means those situations of neglect where any person having the care or custody of a child willfully causes or permits the person or health of the child to be placed in a situation such that his or her person or health is endangered, as proscribed by subdivision (d), including the intentional failure to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter.

(2) "General neglect" means the negligent failure of a person having the care or custody of a child to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or supervision where no physical injury to the child has occurred.

For the purposes of this chapter, a child receiving treatment by spiritual means as provided in section 16508 of the Welfare and Institutions Code or not receiving specified medical treatment for religious reasons, shall not for that reason alone be considered a neglected child.

(d) "Willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child" means a situation where any person willfully causes or permits any child to suffer, or inflicts thereon, unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering, or having the care or custody of any child, willfully causes or permits the person or health of the child to be placed in a situation such that his or her person or health is endangered.

(e) "Corporal punishment or injury" means a situation where any person willfully inflicts upon any child any cruel or inhuman corporal punishment or injury resulting in a traumatic condition.

(f) "Abuse in out-of-home care" means situations of physical injury on a child which is inflicted by other than accidental means, or of sexual assault or neglect or the willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child, as defined in this article, where the person responsible for the child's welfare is a foster parent or the administrator or an employee of a public or private residential home, school, or other institution or agency.

(g) "Child abuse" means a physical injury which is inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person. "Child abuse" also means the sexual assault of a child or any act or omission proscribed by Section 273a (willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child) or 273d (corporal punishment or injury). "Child abuse" also means the neglect of a child or abuse in out-of-home care, as defined in this article.

(h) "Child care custodian" means a teacher, administrative officer, supervisor of child welfare and attendance, or certificated pupil personnel employee of any public or private school; an administrator of a public or private day camp; a licensed day care worker; an administrator of a community care facility licensed to care for children; headstart teacher; a licensing worker or licensing evaluator; public assistance worker; employee of a child care institution including, but not limited to, foster parents, group home personnel and personnel of residential care facilities; a social worker or a probation officer.

(i) "Medical practitioner" means a physician and surgeon, psychiatrist, psychologist, dentist, resident, **intern**, podiatrist, chiropractor, licensed nurse, dental hygienist, or any other person who is currently licensed under Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) of the Business and Professions Code.

(j) "Nonmedical practitioner" means a state or county public health employee who treats a minor for venereal disease or any other condition; a coroner; a paramedic; a marriage, family, or child counselor; or a religious practitioner who diagnoses, examines, or treats children.

(k) "Child protective agency" means a police or sheriff's department, a county probation department, or a county welfare department.

11166. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b), any child care custodian, medical practitioner, nonmedical practitioner, or employee of a child protective agency who has knowledge of or observes a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse shall report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone and shall prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident. For the purposes of this article, "reasonable suspicion" means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain such a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing when appropriate on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse.

(b) Any child care custodian, medical practitioner, nonmedical practitioner, or employee of a child protective agency who has knowledge of or who reasonably suspects that mental suffering has been inflicted on a child or his or her emotional well-being is endangered in any other way, may report such known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency.

(c) Any other person who has knowledge of or observes a child whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been a victim of child abuse may report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency.

(d) When two or more persons who are required to report are present and jointly have knowledge of a known or suspected instance of child abuse, and when there is agreement among them, the telephone report may be made by a member of the team selected by mutual agreement and a single report may be made and signed by such selected member of the reporting team. Any member who has knowledge that the member designated to report has failed to do so, shall thereafter make the report.

(e) The reporting duties under this section are individual, and no supervisor or administrator may impede or inhibit the reporting duties and no person making such a report shall be subject to any sanction for making the report. However, internal procedures to facilitate reporting and apprise supervisors and administrators of reports may be established provided that they are not inconsistent with the provisions of this article.

(f) A county probation or welfare department shall immediately or as soon as practically possible report by telephone to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the case, and to the agency given the responsibility for investigation of cases under Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, every known or suspected instance of child abuse as defined in Section 11165, except acts or omissions coming within the provisions of paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) of Section 11165, which shall only be reported to the county welfare department. A county probation or welfare department shall also send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident to any agency to which it is required to make a telephone report under this subdivision.

A law enforcement agency shall immediately or as soon as practically possible report by telephone to the county welfare department and the agency given responsibility for investigation of cases under Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, every known or suspected instance of child abuse reported to it, except acts or omissions coming within the provisions of paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) of Section 11165, which shall only be reported to the county welfare department. A law enforcement agency shall also send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident to any agency to which it is required to make a telephone report under this subdivision.

11167. (a) A telephone report of a known or suspected instance of child abuse shall include the name of the person making the report, the name of the child, the present location of the child, the nature and extent of the injury, and any other information, including information that led such person to suspect child abuse, requested by the child protective agency.

(b) Information relevant to the incident of child abuse may also be given to an investigator from a child protective agency who is investigating the known or suspected case of child abuse.

(c) The identity of all persons who report under this article shall be confidential and disclosed only between child protective agencies, or to counsel representing a child protective agency, or to the district attorney in a criminal prosecution or in an action initiated under Section 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code arising from alleged child abuse, or to counsel appointed pursuant to Section 318 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or to the county counsel or district attorney in an action initiated under Section 232 of the Civil Code or Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or when those persons waive confidentiality, or by court order.

(d) Persons who may report pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 11166 are not required to include their names.

11168. The written reports required by Section 11166 shall be submitted on forms adopted by the Department of Justice after consultation with representatives of the various professional medical associations and hospital associations and county probation or welfare departments. Such forms shall be distributed by the child protective agencies.

11169. A child protective agency shall forward to the Department of Justice a preliminary report in writing of every case of known or suspected child abuse which it investigates, other than cases coming within the provisions of paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) of Section 11165, whether or not any formal action is taken in the case. However, if after investigation the case proves to be unfounded no report shall be retained by the Department of Justice. If a report has previously been filed which has proved unfounded the Department of Justice shall be notified of that fact. The report shall be in a form approved by the Department of Justice. A child protective agency receiving a written report from another child protective agency shall not send such report to the Department of Justice.

11170. (a) The Department of Justice shall maintain an index of all preliminary reports of child abuse submitted pursuant to Section 11169. The index shall be continually updated by the department and shall not contain any reports that are determined to be unfounded. The department may adopt rules governing recordkeeping and reporting pursuant to this article.

(b) The Department of Justice shall immediately notify a child protective agency which submits a report pursuant to Section 11169, or a district attorney who requests notification, of any information maintained pursuant to subdivision (a) which is relevant to the known or suspected instance of child abuse reported by the agency. A child protective agency shall make that information available to the reporting medical practitioner, child custodian, or guardian ad litem appointed under Section 318 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, if he or she is treating or investigating a case of known or suspected child abuse.

When a report is made pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 11166, the investigating agency shall, upon completion of the investigation or after there has been a final disposition in the matter, inform the person required to report of the results of the investigation and of any action the agency is taking with regard to the child or family.

11171. (a) A physician and surgeon or dentist or their agents and by their direction may take skeletal X-rays of the child without the consent of the child's parent or guardian, but only for purposes of diagnosing the case as one of possible child abuse and determining the extent of such child abuse.



(b) Neither the physician-patient privilege nor the psychotherapist-patient privilege applies to information reported pursuant to this article in any court proceeding or administrative hearing.

11172. (a) No child care custodian, medical practitioner, non-medical practitioner, or employee of a child protective agency who reports a known or suspected instance of child abuse shall be civilly or criminally liable for any report required or authorized by this article. Any other person reporting a known or suspected instance of child abuse shall not incur civil or criminal liability as a result of any report authorized by this article unless it can be proven that a false report was made and the person knew that the report was false. No person required to make a report pursuant to this article, nor any person taking photographs at his or her direction, shall incur any civil or criminal liability for taking photographs of a suspected victim of child abuse, or causing photographs to be taken of a suspected victim of child abuse, without parental consent, or for disseminating the photographs with the reports required by this article. However, the provisions of this section shall not be construed to grant immunity from such liability with respect to any other use of the photographs.

(b) Any person who fails to report an instance of child abuse which he or she knows to exist or reasonably should know to exist, as required by this article, is guilty of a misdemeanor and is punishable by confinement in the county jail for a term not to exceed six months or by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500) or by both.

11174. The Department of Justice, in cooperation with the State Department of Social Services, shall prescribe by regulation guidelines for the investigation of child abuse, as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 11165, in group homes or institutions and shall ensure that the investigation is conducted in accordance with the regulations and guidelines.

NOTE: Section 5 of SB 781 (Chapter 1071, Statutes of 1980) contained the following legislative intent language:

In reenacting the child abuse reporting law, it is the intent of the Legislature to clarify the duties and responsibilities of those who are required to report child abuse. The new provisions are designed to foster cooperation between child protective agencies and other persons required to report. Such cooperation will insure that children will receive the collective judgment of all such agencies and persons regarding the course to be taken to protect the child's interest.

In enacting Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 11165) of Chapter 2 of Title 1 of Part 4 of the Penal Code, the Legislature recognizes that the reporting of child abuse and any subsequent action by a child protective agency involves a delicate balance between the right of parents to control and raise their own children by imposing reasonable discipline and the social interest in the protection and safety of the child. Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to require the reporting of child abuse which is of a serious nature and is not conduct which constitutes reasonable parental discipline.

In repealing Sections 11161.5, 11161.6 and 11161.7 of, and in reenacting the Child Abuse Reporting Law in Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 11165) of Chapter 2 of Title 1 of Part 4 of, the Penal Code, it is not the intent of the Legislature to alter the holding in the decision of *Landeros v. Flood* (1976), 17 Cal. 3d 399, which imposes civil liability for a failure to report child abuse.

It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage each county welfare department to establish within the department a toll-free number for receiving reports of child abuse 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage the board of supervisors of each county to establish a committee composed of representatives from the county welfare department, local law enforcement agencies, county probation department, county health department and other persons representative of the population to be served, and any other person the board of supervisors deems appropriate, which would establish guidelines for the sharing of information and the coordination of the investigation of cases of child abuse.

It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage the county welfare or probation departments to promptly perform for each mandated report they receive and each report received pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 11166 a thorough assessment to determine all of the following:

(a) The composition of the family or household, including the name, address, age, sex, and race of each child named in the report, and any siblings or other children in the same household or in the care of the same adults.

(b) Whether there is reasonable suspicion to believe that any child in the family, household, or child-care facility is being abused or neglected and a determination of the person or persons apparently responsible for the abuse or neglect.

(c) The immediate and long-term risk to each child if he or she remains in the existing environment.

(d) The protective treatment and ameliorative services that appear necessary to help prevent further child abuse or neglect.